A STUDY OF GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

The Truth, the Faith, the Mystery, Foreknowledge, Selection, Predestination, Sonship, and the Economy of God and How Mercy, Grace, Love, and Peace Complete the Vision

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Contents

Introduction — The Flow of God's Purpose
1. The Truth — God's Reality Revealed
2. The Faith — Man's Response to the Revealed Truth
3. The Mystery — Christ and the Church
4. Foreknowledge, Selection, Predestination, and Sonship — The Hidden Genetic Line of God's Eternal Purpose
5. The Economy of God — His Divine Administration and Dispensing
6. The Flow of Mercy, Grace, and Love
7. The Peace of God — The Rest of His Accomplished Work
8. The Summary Vision — The Divine Flow in God's Eternal Purpose

Introduction

Every divine work in Scripture moves with a purpose, a rhythm, and a flow. From eternity past to eternity future, God is neither random nor reactionary — He is purposeful, ordered, and full of love. His purpose centers in Christ, His mystery is revealed in the church, and His way of carrying out that purpose is through His economy — His divine arrangement to dispense Himself into His people.

Yet behind and beneath this divine economy lies an even deeper genetic line: God's foreknowledge, His selection, His predestination, and His intention for sonship. Before creation, before time, before human response, God knew, chose, marked out, and purposed

that many sons would be brought into glory in Christ. What unfolds in time is not accidental — it is the outworking of an eternal design embedded in God's own heart.

To trace this divine flow is to touch the very heart of revelation. The truth unveils what God is as reality; the faith receives and responds to that reality; the mystery opens His hidden plan — Christ and the church; foreknowledge, selection, predestination, and sonship reveal the eternal genetic line of that plan; and the economy puts the whole design into motion in time and in human lives. Flowing with and around this divine framework are the qualities of God's own heart — mercy, grace, love, and peace: the motive, the means, the expression, and the resulting rest of all His dealings with mankind.

When we read Scripture only as doctrine or moral instruction, we may grasp portions, yet miss the living stream that runs through it. But when we see the truth, the faith, the mystery, the eternal genetic purpose of sonship, and the economy together — undergirded by mercy, grace, love, and peace — we begin to perceive not merely what God does, but why He does it, how He planned it, and how He now carries it out.

This study follows that divine current — from God's eternal intention in foreknowledge and predestination, through Christ and the church, to its living, present expression in the local churches today.

1. The Truth (ἡ ἀλήθεια) — God's Reality Revealed

The Truth

Truth is where God's revelation begins. Before there can be faith, before there can be mystery, before there can be the divine economy at work among His people, there must first be truth — the unveiling of reality as God Himself knows it. Everything in Scripture flows out of this fountainhead. Truth is not merely correctness, accuracy, or doctrinal precision; truth is reality as it exists in God. It is what is, as opposed to what merely seems to be. Truth is not an abstract principle, not a philosophical system, and not a collection of theological statements. Truth is the self-disclosure of God Himself. It is the unveiling of what God is in His being, nature, heart, purpose, and action. To touch truth, therefore, is not simply to understand something — it is to touch God as reality.

From the beginning, God has desired to make Himself known. Creation itself was an initial expression of truth, declaring His invisible attributes and eternal power (Rom. 1:20). The Law revealed His righteousness, the prophets His faithfulness, the psalms His heart. Yet all these were still partial unveilings, fragments of light pointing toward a greater and fuller reality. When Christ came, He was not merely a messenger of truth — He was truth incarnate. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). In Him, truth put on flesh; reality stepped into human history.

This means that truth is not merely what God says — truth is what God is, expressed and manifested.

Truth as Unveiled Reality

The Greek word for truth (ἀλήθεια, alētheia) can, with full accuracy, be rendered reality. It literally means "that which is unveiled," "that which is brought out into the open." It denotes something once hidden now fully disclosed. In Christ, God's very being — once veiled in eternity — was brought into visibility. As John wrote, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Grace is God given to man for enjoyment.
Truth is God revealed to man as reality.

Grace supplies.
Truth defines.

Grace brings us God.
Truth shows us who God is.

When Jesus declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), He was not saying, "I am a correct doctrine," or "I am a true statement." He was saying, in effect, "I am the reality of all that God is and all that God intends." Christ is not merely true — He is real.

Truth in Scripture does not primarily mean the opposite of falsehood; it means the opposite of shadow, symbol, and mere outward form. Everything in the Old Testament was a picture. Christ is the reality of every positive thing those pictures pointed to. He is the real light, the real bread, the real water, the real vine, the real shepherd, the real righteousness, the real peace, the real rest, the real temple, the real sacrifice, and the real life.

He is not merely true food — He is food that can actually be eaten.
He is not merely true drink — He is drink that can actually be drunk.

This is why Scripture speaks in such physical, experiential terms. "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (John 6:57). Christ is not a mental concept to be analyzed but a living reality to be ingested. He can be masticated, assimilated, and metabolized by the inner man. He becomes spiritual nourishment that is digested into our being and constituted into our spiritual constitution.

This moves truth out of the realm of mere truism and into the realm of living reality. A truism is a true statement that informs the mind. Christ as reality is a living Person who supplies the being. To know truth, therefore, is not merely to agree with correct teaching — it is to touch, receive, and assimilate divine reality. When truth is reduced to doctrinal accuracy alone, it remains outside of us. When truth is received as reality, it becomes life within us.

Truth Versus Appearance

Jesus declared, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). This freedom is not political, social, or psychological, but ontological — a freedom of being.

It is freedom from illusion, deception, self-fabricated identity, religious outwardness, and false spiritual ground. Fallen humanity exists largely in appearance rather than reality. Truth shatters the false ground upon which the old creation stands and transfers us into the unshakable realm of what God actually is.

Truth is therefore costly. It destroys what is false in us. It strips away pretension. It exposes self-made righteousness. It dismantles religious illusion. Yet at the same time, it introduces us into a new realm of divine stability — reality as God lives it. To live in truth is therefore to live in God's own reality.

The Church as the Bearer of Reality

The church is called "the pillar and base of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). This does not mean that the church possesses truth as a storehouse of doctrines. It means that the church upholds, bears, expresses, and displays divine reality in the universe. The church is God's corporate vessel for the visible expression of invisible reality.

Wherever the church touches truth as living reality, she shines. Wherever she reduces truth to doctrine alone, she loses weight and authority. Every genuine revival in history has never been merely emotional — it has always been a recovery of divine reality. Whenever truth is freshly unveiled, the church is inwardly renewed and outwardly strengthened. When truth becomes dim, the church becomes hollow.

The Spirit of Truth and the Internalization of Reality

Truth is not only outward revelation; it is also inward constitution. The Spirit of truth does not merely teach outwardly — He imparts inwardly. Jesus promised, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all reality" (John 16:13). This guiding is an ongoing inward leading, not merely a moment of instruction.

The Spirit does not merely tell us what truth is — He works truth into us. He takes divine reality and makes it subjective, internal, and experiential. Truth begins as revelation, but it must become constitution. It must be written into our disposition until it becomes part of our inward makeup.

Thus, truth is not merely known — it is lived. It reshapes our thinking, reorders our desires, purifies our motives, and conforms us to Christ from within.

Truth as the Foundation of the Entire Divine Flow

Without truth, faith has no foundation.
Without truth, mystery cannot be unveiled.
Without truth, the divine economy cannot operate.

God's administration always functions in light. Truth is the first movement in every work of God. It is the sunrise of divine operation. Nothing meaningful in God's eternal purpose begins in darkness, ambiguity, or confusion. Everything begins with unveiled reality.

Truth is therefore not one topic among many. It is the starting point of the entire divine flow. It is the initial movement of God toward man. Before God can dispense Himself, He must first reveal Himself.

Truth in Its Highest Definition

In its highest sense, truth is:
God manifested in Christ,
realized in the Spirit,
and expressed through the church.

Truth is the shining of divine reality into human hearts. It is not merely that God exists — it is that God becomes known as He truly is. This unveiling begins the eternal flow that proceeds from His throne, carrying life, light, transformation, and glory wherever it goes.

And when this truth is revealed, faith must respond. Faith is not an invention of man; it is the echo of divine reality in the human heart. Thus, the unveiling of truth becomes the gateway to "The Faith — Man's Response to the Revealed Truth."

2. The Faith — Man's Response to the Revealed Truth

When God reveals His truth, He calls forth a response — faith. Faith is not a human invention, a psychological decision, or a religious effort. It is the echo of divine revelation in the heart of man. The truth issues from God; faith arises within us as our living "Amen" to what He has spoken. What God speaks as reality, faith receives as reality. Thus, truth and faith always move together: revelation from God and response from man. Without truth, faith has no content; without faith, truth has no entrance.

Faith is therefore not something we generate upward toward God; it is something that rises within us when God speaks downward to us. The voice of God begets the faith of man.

Faith as the Means of Union

Faith is far more than mental assent or religious optimism. It is the living bond that unites us to Christ Himself. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph. 3:17). Faith is the way Christ makes His home within us. Through faith, we do not merely agree with doctrine — we enter into a living union with a living Person.

What the truth declares, faith receives. What the truth reveals, faith experiences. If truth is the unveiling of God's reality, faith is the human side of that reality — our entrance into it. Faith does not strive to make something real; it rests in what God says is already real. God speaks, and faith responds, "It is so." Thus, faith is not wishful thinking; it is the acknowledgment of divine fact.

In this way, faith becomes the door through which Christ Himself enters into our experience.

Faith as the Substance of Things Hoped For

Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The word substance (hypostasis) means that which underlies, a foundation or support. Faith gives unseen realities a present standing. What is invisible in promise becomes tangible in experience. Faith does not create reality — it lays hold of reality. When Abraham believed God, it was counted to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3). His faith was not in himself, in circumstances, or in visible possibility. It was in the speaking God. Faith always looks away from self and rests on God's faithfulness. It transfers the ground of assurance from the shifting soil of human performance to the solid rock of divine reliability.

This is why faith produces peace: because it leans entirely on who God is.

The Faith — The Objective Body of Truth

Scripture also speaks not only of faith but of "the faith." "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Here the faith refers to the entire objective revelation of God's truth — the apostles' teaching, the mystery of Christ and the church, the economy of God, and all that pertains to His eternal purpose. It is the divine deposit entrusted to the church.

Our personal faith brings us into the faith; our believing joins us to the universal revelation. The two are inseparable — one subjective and living, the other objective and complete; one personal, one corporate. We do not merely believe something; we believe into a whole divine revelation.

Thus, faith is both our personal response and our corporate inheritance.

Faith and the Operation of Life

Faith is the spiritual switch that connects the believer to the divine current. The life of God flows through faith as the channel of His dispensing. "He who supplies the Spirit to you and does works of power among you, does He do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:5). The Spirit operates where faith opens.

When we believe, we open. God's grace is like a mighty river, but faith is the cup that receives it. Without faith, grace remains objective; with faith, it becomes our present supply. This is why the Christian life is described as "living by faith" (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 2:20). Faith does not end at conversion; it becomes the daily posture of dependence and receptivity toward God.

Through faith, God dispenses Himself as life, light, power, and supply.

Faith Tested and Perfected

True faith must be tested — not to destroy it, but to purify and strengthen it. Peter says it is "more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire" (1 Pet. 1:7). Trials expose whether our faith rests in outward circumstances or in the invisible God.
Abraham's faith matured through testing: leaving his country, waiting for Isaac, and offering that very son on the altar. Each stage stripped away natural supports until his faith rested on God alone. Every test deepened his union with the unseen God and proved that the foundation of his hope was unshakable.

So also with us, faith grows through surrender. Every delay, every disappointment, every seeming contradiction becomes a deeper invitation to trust God beyond what we see. God not only gives us faith — He also educates our faith.

Faith and Vision

Faith and vision are twins in the economy of God. Vision opens the eyes to see divine reality; faith steps into it. Without vision, faith has no direction; without faith, vision remains unrealized. The two work together to bring God's purpose from revelation into manifestation.

Paul's entire ministry flowed from this union of sight and trust. "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19). His seeing governed his believing, and his believing governed his living. Faith always follows vision — and vision always demands faith.

Faith, Love, and Hope

Faith does not stand alone. It works through love (Gal. 5:6) and looks forward in hope (1 Thess. 1:3). Faith receives, love expresses, and hope endures. Faith brings us into the flow of divine life; love causes that life to flow out to others; hope anchors us in its final consummation.

These three are not merely Christian virtues; they are the three pillars of the divine life in experience.

Wherever the divine flow reaches a human heart, faith springs up as the first response. It is the gateway through which eternity enters time, the unseen becomes real, and God's eternal purpose begins to operate within man.

3. The Mystery — Christ and the Church

The Hidden Mystery Revealed

The mystery of God's purpose, hidden from ages and generations, was revealed to the apostles: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:26–27) This mystery is not an abstract doctrine but a living revelation — Christ Himself as life within His redeemed people. Paul called this the great mystery: "Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:32) It is the secret of God's heart, the key to all His actions from eternity to eternity. God's goal has

never been merely to save individuals but to gain a corporate expression of His Son. The church is not an organization man joins but an organism that grows out of Christ's own life. From the beginning, God intended that His divine life would be embodied in Christ and expressed through the church. Thus, the mystery of God is Christ, and the mystery of Christ is the church — the two joined as one reality, heaven's purpose fulfilled on earth.

The Mystery of Godliness — God Manifested in the Flesh

Paul declared, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh." (1 Timothy 3:16) This points first to Christ, the Word made flesh, but it extends also to the church, which is His Body and continuation on the earth. The church is to manifest God in the flesh — not as an imitation, but by participation. When the believers abide in Christ, walk in the Spirit, walk in the light, have fellowship with one another, love one another, and practice oneness in the local churches, God is seen again in human flesh. This is the divine intention: that through a redeemed and indwelt humanity, God Himself would be expressed. Yet, what do we see today? Instead of one living Body expressing Christ in reality, we find confusion, division, and mixture. The divine mystery has been obscured by centuries of human tradition.

The Church — Universal and Local

The church has two inseparable aspects: universal and local. To speak only of the universal church is to speak incompletely, for the other part of the equation is local. The church equals the universal aspect plus the local aspect; this equation is immutable and valid for as long as there is a church age. Paul said that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth — that was true in the apostolic age of the first century. But after the apostles, a kind of mutation occurred, and the church, which had been expressed through the local churches, became a mixture of paganism, philosophy, and political power, and became known as Christianity and Christendom. No longer was it simply Christ, but Christ plus ianity and endom — a tragic mixture that veiled the original pattern.

A Time When the Word Was Rare

During the time of the Judges, when the word of God was rare in the land, everyone did what was right in his own eyes. It was an age of spiritual confusion, when divine revelation had grown dim and human opinion ruled. In that time, we read of Micah, a man who made idols and hired a wandering Levite to be his personal priest. (Judges 17:5–13) This was religion by convenience, worship designed for comfort, not obedience. The pattern of that time foreshadows much of Christendom today — where individuals and systems hire priests, teachers, and leaders to serve according to human preference rather than divine revelation. When there is no vision, people make their own religion. This is what happens when the living flow of divine truth is replaced by the stagnant pools of tradition and self-rule.

The Tragic Substitution — From Christ to Christendom

In the early centuries, the pure testimony of Christ expressed in the local churches was gradually replaced by an outward system — impressive in form but void of the inner life. Christianity and Christendom became established structures that retained the name of Christ but lost His living reality. The divine organism became a human organization. The church, meant to manifest the mystery of godliness, became instead a mixture of politics, philosophy, and ritual. To speak poetically but truthfully, Christianity and Christendom are damnable mixtures — not because Christ is not there, but because He is buried beneath centuries of human addition. This condition is not to be excused or politely ignored; it must be spoken of with holy urgency. The Bible is clear: "Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins." (Revelation 18:4) The Lord calls His people back to the simplicity of Christ, to the purity of His life, and to the oneness expressed in the local churches.

The Mystery Recovered in Reality

To recover this mystery is to recover God's central thought. Christ is the content; the church is the expression. The church's calling is not merely to preach doctrines but to manifest God in the flesh — to live as His dwelling, His Body, His bride, and His fullness. When believers see this vision, it rescues them from religious routine and draws them into the living stream of God's purpose. The Lord is not seeking new movements or names but the reality of His Body on earth — local churches in oneness, expressing the universal Christ in every place. Here, the mystery becomes visible again: God in Christ, Christ in the church, and the church in the world as His testimony. This is the mystery restored to light — the divine plan unveiled and lived out in human history.

4. Foreknowledge, Selection, Predestination, and Sonship — The Hidden Genetic Line of God's Eternal Purpose

Behind everything God does in time stands what God purposed in eternity. Before there was creation, before there was sin, before redemption was ever needed, God already possessed a heart-desire and a settled intention. That intention was not merely to save sinners, but to gain many sons conformed to the image of His Firstborn Son, that His life might be expressed corporately in a Body and ultimately consummated in a City. Scripture reveals this eternal intention through a divine sequence: foreknowledge, selection, predestination, and sonship. These are not isolated doctrines; they are the hidden genetic line of God's eternal purpose.

Foreknowledge — God's Loving Prior Knowing

Romans 8:29 begins the divine sequence with these words: "Those whom He foreknew…" Foreknowledge in Scripture is not bare foresight. It is not God scanning the future to see who would choose Him. The Greek word speaks of intimate, relational knowing beforehand. Before time began, God lovingly knew a people in Christ. This knowing was not

individualistic in isolation, but corporate in nature, a people for His house, a Body for His Son, sons for His glory. Foreknowledge is the opening movement of God's eternal purpose, the affectionate knowing of a Father before the children were ever born.

Selection — God's Purposeful Choosing in Christ

Flowing out of foreknowledge is selection. "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." Ephesians 1:4. Selection is not competitive favoritism, nor a decree of exclusion. In the New Testament, selection is always unto purpose, not unto rejection. God selected a people in Christ to be holy, to be loving, and to be His corporate expression. This selection operates within God's universal love. Selection produces the vessel through which God reaches the many.

Predestination — God Marking Out the Divine Destiny

Predestination carries the sequence forward. "He predestinated us unto sonship." Ephesians 1:5. Predestination in Scripture is not fatalism. It is God marking out beforehand the divine horizon for those He selected. Romans 8:29 defines that destiny clearly: to be conformed to the image of His Son. God did not predestinate believers merely to forgiveness, heaven, or escape from judgment. He predestinated them unto conformity to Christ, unto maturity, unto glory, and unto His building. This predestination is corporate. God is bringing many sons to glory. The final issue of predestination is not individual reward but the New Jerusalem, the corporate Son in eternal manifestation.

Sonship — The Goal of the Divine Economy

Sonship is the destination of the entire divine sequence. The New Testament word for sonship speaks of son-placement, the public establishment of matured sons in their full standing and inheritance. There is the inward reality of regeneration, where divine life is imparted, and there is the outward manifestation of son-placement, where that life reaches maturity and glory. Romans 8 speaks of both: we now have the Spirit of sonship inwardly, yet we still await the redemption of our body, the full public manifestation of the sons of God. God is not merely producing forgiven children; He is producing manifested sons who bear His image, express His life, and share His authority.

Calling, Justification, and Glorification — The Golden Chain in Time

What God purposed in eternity, He carries out in time through calling, justification, and glorification. "Those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." Romans 8:30. Calling brings the foreknown, selected, predestinated ones into Christ. Justification gives them the legal standing before God. Glorification completes the organic transformation. Between justification and glorification lies the lifelong process of transformation, conformity, and growth in life. God's work is not only legal; it is organic. He is building sons inwardly before He manifests them outwardly.

The Corporate Goal — The Body, the Bride, and the City

All of this is not for isolated spirituality. The many sons become the Body of Christ, the corporate expression of the Son on the earth. That Body becomes the Bride of Christ, the counterpart prepared for His return. And that Bride becomes the New Jerusalem, the eternal dwelling of God with man. Sonship, therefore, is not only personal transformation; it is corporate construction. God gains His sons to gain His house.

The Glorious Goal Revealed in Ephesians

The Epistle to the Ephesians unveils the highest vision of what these many sons become in maturity. God's desire is not merely for a spiritual church, nor even only a functioning church, but for a glorious church, "not having spot or wrinkle or any such things." Ephesians 5:27. In Ephesians, the many sons are seen from every divine angle: they are the **ekklesia**, called out to express Christ; **the Body**, filled with the fullness of Him who fills all in all; **the one new man**, where all natural distinctions are swallowed up in Christ; **the kingdom**, where God rules in life; **the household of God**, where the Father has many sons at home with Him; **the holy temple**, built together as God's dwelling in spirit; **the Bride**, prepared in love for Christ's satisfaction; **and the corporate warrior**, standing in victory against the spiritual powers of darkness. These are not different peoples, works, or destinies. They are one corporate Son in many stages of expression. What begins in foreknowledge as God's intention ends in glory as God's manifestation.

Enriched in Him Unto Glory

Paul's word to the Corinthians unveils the experiential side of this eternal purpose: "That in everything you were enriched in Him, in all utterance and all knowledge." 1 Corinthians 1:5. God's intention is not merely that believers would be placed into Christ positionally, but that they would be enriched with Christ inwardly. Enrichment implies increase, supply, fullness, and beautification. God does not deal with His sons in spiritual poverty. He enriches them with Christ as life, light, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. As these riches are dispensed, the sons grow in expression, in utterance, in understanding, and in living reality.

This enrichment is what transforms sonship into glory. A poor, undeveloped son does not express the father's fullness, but an enriched, matured son does. Thus, God's goal is not merely sons in name, but sons filled with Christ's riches in every part of their being. When the church is enriched in Christ, she becomes qualified to be the glorious church of Ephesians, not merely spiritual in experience, but radiant in expression, filled with the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

The Washing of the Water in the Word — Metabolic Glorification in the Church

"That Christ might sanctify the church, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word, that He might present the church to Himself glorious." Ephesians 5. This cleansing is not outward correction but inward washing. The water of the Word does not merely instruct; it cleanses, renews, and metabolically transforms. As the Word flows through the

church, Christ is continually adding Himself as life while simultaneously removing every foreign element that does not match His nature. This is sanctification in its deepest meaning, not separation merely in position, but purification by divine life in operation.

If God desired something merely spiritual, He already possesses myriads of angels and untold numbers of spiritual beings who serve Him day and night. But God's eternal intention is far higher than that. He desires something not merely spiritual, but glorious, the expression of Himself through a redeemed, transformed, sanctified humanity. Angels can worship and serve. Only the church can be washed, transformed, glorified, and presented to Christ as His counterpart.

This is why enriching, sanctifying, washing, purifying, and metabolic transformation all belong together. Enriching is God adding more of Christ into His people. Washing is God using the living Word to cleanse away every inward stain. Purifying is God refining the inner composition. Metabolic transformation is the organic result, life replacing life, Christ replacing self, the new creation swallowing up the old. Out of this inward process comes glory, not artificial brilliance, but God shining out from within His people.

It is through this enriching and sanctifying work that God gains His glorious expression. By enriching, God is adding more of Himself into His lovers; by sanctifying and purifying, God is subtracting the impurities of the old creation from their being. As more of God is added and more of self is removed, the result is not merely improvement, but illumination, the shining out of God Himself from within His people. This shining is the meaning of glory. Glory is not outward splendor; it is God expressed through transformed humanity. When this inward enriching and outward purifying reach maturity through metabolic transformation, the church becomes what God has always desired, not merely a spiritual church in experience, but a glorious church in expression, a Christ-exalting, Christ-living, Christ-loving, Christ-expressing church, radiating the life and nature of God without mixture.

This is what real local church life looks like. It is not merely meetings, teaching, organization, or activity. It is a corporate environment where Christ is continually being added, where the Word is continually washing, where the Spirit is continually transforming, and where God is continually shining out. Here the church is being prepared not only to function, but to be presented to Christ glorious, a corporate vessel of divine life.

The Connection to God's Economy

This eternal sequence now brings us directly to the economy of God. Foreknowledge explains the heart behind the economy. Selection identifies the vessel of the economy. Predestination defines the goal of the economy. Sonship reveals the meaning of the economy. And calling, justification, and glorification show how the economy operates in time. The economy of God is simply the administration of sonship, God dispensing Himself as life to produce sons in maturity for His corporate expression.

Thus, before the economy begins to operate in practice, we see the eternal genetic line that governs it. The mystery of Christ and the church has its origin in foreknowledge. The economy of God finds its meaning in sonship. And the entire divine flow moves steadily toward one end, many sons in glory, God dwelling in man, and man expressing God forever.

5. The Economy of God — His Divine Administration and Dispensing

Having seen the mystery of Christ and the church in God's eternal purpose, we now come to the divine economy, the way God carries out this mystery in time and in experience. What God purposed in eternity through foreknowledge, selection, and predestination unto sonship, He now executes through His living, active administration. The economy of God is His divine arrangement to dispense Himself in Christ as the Spirit into His chosen people, that what was planned before the foundation of the world might be realized in living persons on the earth.

God did not foreknow, select, and predestine merely that forgiven people would escape judgment, but that many sons would be brought into glory, conformed to the image of His Firstborn Son, and built together as the corporate expression of Christ. The economy of God is therefore the working out of sonship in reality. It is the divine process by which God imparts His life, nature, and person into redeemed humanity, producing not only individual believers, but a corporate vessel, the church, as the Body and expression of Christ.

Thus, God's economy is not merely a plan on paper, nor a system of outward arrangements. It is a living dispensing of the Triune God into His people for life, transformation, building, and expression. What was determined in eternity through foreknowledge now flows in time through dispensing. What was predestined unto sonship is now manifested through the Spirit's inward working. In this way, God's eternal purpose becomes a visible, corporate reality on the earth.

The Meaning of God's Economy

In Greek, the word translated "economy" is oikonomia — a combination of oikos, meaning "house," and nomos, meaning "law" or "administration." It refers to a household arrangement or stewardship. God's economy, then, is His household plan to dispense Himself as life into His people so that they may express Him collectively as His dwelling place.

This economy is not about money or management in the worldly sense. It is the divine arrangement through which God executes His eternal purpose. Ephesians 1:10 speaks of "the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ." Everything God does — creation, redemption, salvation, sanctification, glorification — is part of this economy, centered in Christ and carried out by the Spirit.

The Administrator of the Economy

God Himself is the source, but He has appointed Christ as the Administrator of His economy. Christ is both the content and the executor of this plan. As the Son of God, He embodies the divine riches; as the Son of Man, He distributes them to us through His Spirit. In Him, heaven's resources are opened to humanity.

Paul described his ministry as being given grace "to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is." (Ephesians 3:8–9) Christ is the mystery; the church is the expression; and the economy is the means by which the mystery is fulfilled in reality.

The Divine Distribution System

Every economy includes the distribution of resources to meet needs. In God's economy, what He distributes is not things but Himself. The Father is the source, the Son is the embodiment, and the Spirit is the transmission. The divine flow moves from the throne of God through Christ to the Spirit, and from the Spirit into our spirit — an unbroken chain of life and supply.

This is why grace is never static. It flows. The Spirit within us is like a divine current, constantly ministering Christ as life, wisdom, strength, and joy. When believers yield to this flow, the riches of Christ are dispensed into their being, transforming them from within and building them together as His Body.

The Purpose of the Economy

The goal of God's economy is not individual blessing but corporate expression. God dispenses Himself not merely to make better persons, but to produce a Body, a house, a bride, a city — the church. Through His divine dispensing, He reproduces Himself in many sons, conforming them to the image of the Firstborn Son, that Christ might be "the firstborn among many brothers." (Romans 8:29)

The economy of God thus unites the mystery of Christ and the church with the practical working out of God's eternal purpose. It is the framework of divine life in motion — God administrating Himself into man until Christ is all and in all.

The Contrast — Man's Religious System

While God's economy is life-centered and organic, man's systems are often organization-centered and outward. Religion seeks to manage man for God; God's economy seeks to dispense God into man. Religion produces activity without life; economy produces life that expresses itself in function.

Throughout history, the divine economy has been obscured by human tradition. But the Spirit continues to call the church back to the living reality of God's plan — not methods,

programs, or hierarchies, but Christ Himself as life and everything. To return to the divine economy is to return to the flow of God's own being.

The Economy and the Flow

Every economy operates by circulation — resources must move to produce growth. In the same way, God's economy operates by divine flow. The Father's riches in Christ flow through the Spirit into the believers, and from the believers back to God in thanksgiving and praise. This circulation maintains the health of the Body and fulfills God's plan.
When this flow is hindered, the divine economy is frustrated. When believers live by the Spirit, the economy functions perfectly — life flows, supply increases, and the church is built up. Thus, to live in the Spirit is to live in the economy of God.

The Final Outcome

The consummation of God's economy is the New Jerusalem — the ultimate expression of divine dispensing. There, the throne (signifying God's authority) and the river (signifying His supply) flow together. Administration and enjoyment are one. What God purposed in eternity past is realized in eternity future through His divine economy accomplished in Christ and applied by the Spirit.

In that city, there will be no more separation between divine rule and human satisfaction. The throne and the river will never conflict; they are two aspects of one reality — God's life reigning in love and peace forever. This is the goal of God's economy: Himself fully expressed through His redeemed, glorified people for all eternity.

6. The Flow of Mercy, Grace, and Love

If the economy of God is His divine system for dispensing Himself into His people, then mercy, grace, and love are the very character and atmosphere of that divine current. They show us not merely what God does, but what God is in His flowing toward man

The Character of the Divine Flow

Every river bears the quality of its source. Some are cold and clear; others warm and heavy with life. The divine flow is unique — it carries the fragrance of love, the gentleness of mercy, and the strengthening power of grace. God does not distribute blessings mechanically; He dispenses Himself personally. Every act of His economy — choosing, redeeming, calling, sanctifying, glorifying — is motivated and carried out in love. "God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved." (Ephesians 2:4–5) Here we see three strands woven together: love as the source, mercy as love reaching downward, and grace as love reaching outward.

Love — The Source of All

Love is the fountainhead of God's being. "God is love." (1 John 4:8) Everything He does flows out from what He is. Before creation, love purposed to share itself; creation was love expressing beauty, redemption was love reclaiming the lost, and the church is love dwelling with the beloved. Love does not seek its own but pours itself out. In the economy of God, love is the heartbeat that drives the flow — the eternal motive power of divine life.

Mercy — Love Stooping to the Fallen

Mercy is love bending low. When man fell, love could not reach him without stooping; thus love put on the form of mercy. Mercy is not weakness but divine strength made tender. It reaches the undeserving and the unlovely, not to excuse sin but to rescue from it. "His mercy endures forever." (Psalm 136) Every believer stands upon mercy's ground. Without mercy, grace could not flow; mercy removes the barrier, cleansing the debris of sin that blocks the stream.

Grace — Love Reaching and Empowering

Grace is love acting. It is God not only forgiving but supplying. Grace is not merely favor; it is God Himself coming to do in us what we cannot do for ourselves. Where mercy removes the barrier, grace builds and transforms. "The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17) Law demands; grace supplies. Law says, "Do and live." Grace says, "Live and do." Grace is not a thing received once but a person lived by daily — Christ in us as life, teaching, enabling, and sustaining us moment by moment.

The Divine Sequence — Love, Mercy, Grace

The three move in divine sequence. Love is God's motive; mercy is love reaching the miserable; grace is love transforming the rescued. Love desires, mercy delivers, grace develops. All three meet in Christ. On the cross, love was displayed, mercy was extended, and grace was released. Through that one act, the flow of God entered the world like a river breaking its banks.

The Flow Through the Church

That same current now runs through the Body of Christ. The church is the channel through which God's mercy, grace, and love reach humanity. Wherever the church lives in the Spirit, the river flows — healing, forgiving, reconciling, and building. "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38) When saints forgive, that is mercy flowing; when they bear one another's burdens, that is grace working; when they love without condition, that is God Himself expressed. A church that ceases to love ceases to flow. When fellowship hardens into form, the river turns to ice. But when hearts soften before the Lord, the stream breaks loose again and heaven touches earth.

The Eternal Expression

In eternity, the same river continues: "a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Revelation 22:1) That river is the consummation of mercy, grace, and love mingled into one eternal flow. The throne — symbol of administration — and the Lamb — symbol of redemption — are joined; government and grace, justice and mercy, majesty and meekness flow together. In that flow, God's nature and His heart are one. What began in mercy, continued in grace, and was sustained by love, ends in everlasting peace.

The Response of the Redeemed

Those who receive mercy must show mercy; those who live by grace must extend grace; those who are loved must love. This is how the divine economy circulates through human lives. To dam the flow is to lose its freshness; to release it is to multiply its strength. Paul summed it up: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2 Corinthians 13:14) The divine flow begins in the Father's love, reaches us through the Son's grace, and is enjoyed in the Spirit's fellowship — one river, three currents, forever one.

6. The Peace of God — The Rest of His Accomplished Work

When the flow of mercy, grace, and love has completed its course, what remains is peace — the still water of divine rest. Peace is the atmosphere of God's satisfaction, the calm of His completed purpose.

The Stillness After the Flow

Peace is not silence born of exhaustion, but rest born of fulfillment. God's peace is not fragile; it does not come from the absence of trouble but from the presence of order — everything reconciled, aligned, and harmonized under His will. In creation, God rested not because He was weary but because everything was "very good." (Genesis 1:31–2:2) Likewise, peace is the rest of divine completion — the Sabbath of the soul that flows from the finished work of Christ. "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself." (Colossians 1:20) Peace is therefore not a feeling first, but a fact — the settled condition of everything brought back to God through Christ.

Peace — The Signature of Completion

In the Bible, peace always follows work that has been accomplished. After the ark rested, there was peace. After the conquest under Joshua, the land had rest. After the cross, Jesus said, "Peace be with you." (John 20:19) Where God's work is done, peace reigns. Where man's striving intrudes, rest is lost. Peace is not something we must strive for; it is the inheritance of those who believe.

The Peace of Reconciliation

The first expression of divine peace is reconciliation — the removal of hostility between God and man. Sin had made us enemies, alienated in mind and deed. (Colossians 1:21) But Christ, by His death, not only removed the barrier but restored relationship. Peace, then, is not a treaty negotiated; it is a nature imparted. It is not the truce of two parties weary of fighting, but the union of two lives made one. In Christ, the war is over, and the relationship is healed at the deepest level of being. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1) This is not mere judicial peace — it is organic peace: the harmony of divine and human life mingled in oneness.

The Peace of the Kingdom

The peace of God is also the order of His rule. Isaiah called Christ "the Prince of Peace," whose government and peace would increase without end. (Isaiah 9:6–7) Where His rule extends, peace expands. Peace is not passivity; it is the activity of righteousness reigning. When the heart is governed by self, there is unrest; when it is governed by Christ, there is calm. To be ruled by the peace of God is to live under divine government that brings quietness, stability, and joy. "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body." (Colossians 3:15) Notice again: peace is corporate — not only in individual hearts, but "in one body." The peace of Christ is meant to govern the church as a shared inward rest. Where peace rules, there is oneness; where peace departs, division enters.

The Peace That Guards

Paul describes another dimension: "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7) Peace not only reigns — it guards. It is both throne and sentinel. The Greek word phroureo means "to garrison, to surround with a guard." When anxiety assaults the mind, peace becomes a divine sentry that patrols the heart, reminding it that Christ is enough. This peace surpasses understanding because it does not depend on explanation; it depends on presence. When the Prince of Peace dwells within, every storm must yield to His authority.

The Peace of the Church

The divine flow reaches its maturity when peace characterizes the community of believers. In Acts 9:31, after a period of persecution, the record says, "Then the church had peace throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and was edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied." Where peace dwells, the Body is built up. This peace is not compromise or avoidance of truth; it is the fruit of everything being rightly related under Christ's headship. It is the Body synchronized with the Head — the heartbeats of heaven and earth in rhythm.

The Peace of the New Creation

Peace is not just an experience for the present; it is the climate of eternity. The new heavens and new earth are called "the dwelling of righteousness." (2 Peter 3:13) There, peace will no

longer be interrupted by sin, conflict, or death. The New Jerusalem is the city of unbroken peace — the ultimate Sabbath of God, the eternal rest of His accomplished purpose. There, the throne and the river coexist, administration and enjoyment in perfect harmony. In that eternal calm, God's desire is satisfied, and His people rest in untroubled joy forever.

Entering the Peace Now

Yet that eternal peace begins now for those who believe. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you." (John 14:27) This peace is not escapism but participation — to live in the finished work of Christ daily. Faith takes its stand not in striving but in resting. To abide in peace is to live in harmony with God's completed purpose — to live in the reality that it is finished. This is why peace is the final tone of every epistle: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father." Grace flows, and peace follows — always in that order.

The Still River

At the end of all God's work there is a river — calm, bright, and deep — where mercy, grace, and love have all reached their goal. The flow has fulfilled its mission; the current rests in the sea of peace. Here God and man rest together — not in inactivity, but in perfect harmony. The universe is quiet, not because nothing moves, but because everything moves in tune with Him. That is the peace of God — the rest of His accomplished work.

8. The Summary Vision — The Divine Flow in God's Eternal Purpose

After peace has stilled the waters of God's work, the entire flow of divine purpose can now be seen as one great, unbroken river—from eternity past to eternity future, carrying all things toward God's final rest and glory.

The River That Began Before Time

Before there was a world, before sin, before angels sang or stars were hung in the void, God purposed a flow. This flow was not a reaction to failure but an expression of His own nature—love longing to share itself, life desiring to reproduce, light yearning to shine. From that eternal beginning, everything that God has done moves along one channel: the flow of His life from Himself, through His Son, in His Spirit, to man—and through man, back to Himself in glory. Creation was the first outflow. Redemption was the cleansing of the channel. The church is the vessel of the flow. The kingdom is the rule within the flow. And the New Jerusalem is the destination where the flow comes to rest forever.

The Golden Thread Through Scripture

The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is not a random record of divine acts; it is one continuous stream. In Genesis, a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden (Genesis 2:10). In Revelation, the same river flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb (Revelation 22:1). The first river flowed from creation; the last river flows from redemption—but both are one river, carrying God's life through time and eternity. At every point in history, that river has met resistance: in Eden, the serpent; in the world before the

flood, corruption; in Israel, idolatry; in Christendom, mixture; in every believer, the self-life. Yet the flow has never ceased—because the source has never diminished.

The Flow from God to Man

From the Father, the source of love; through the Son, the embodiment of grace; by the Spirit, the transmission of life—the divine current moves unbroken. When it reaches man, it transforms him from vessel of dust into vessel of glory. This is the meaning of salvation: not merely rescue from judgment, but participation in the divine flow. 'He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.' (John 7:38) Thus, the flow that began in God returns through the believer—the creature becomes a co-stream of the Creator.

The Flow Through the Church

The church is the continuation of the river. Wherever the Spirit is unhindered, the flow is clear and strong; wherever man intervenes with control, division, or self-interest, the river is dammed. To recover the church is to reopen the channels. The Lord's move in every age has been the same—to bring His people back to the simplicity of Christ, the oneness of His Body, and the living flow of the Spirit. When local churches live in that flow, they become tributaries of one river, refreshing the cities of men with the presence of God.

The Flow into Eternity

At last the river reaches its delta—the New Jerusalem, the consummation of all God's work. There the river of life flows clear as crystal, and on either side grows the tree of life bearing twelve fruits. (Revelation 22:1-2) This is the final harmony: God and man mingled, heaven and earth united, time swallowed up in eternity. No more striving, no more separation, no more darkness—only the tranquil brilliance of divine life flowing in endless communion. The city is not a place of escape but of expression. It is the universe reordered around the Lamb—the throne at the center, the river proceeding, the nations healed, the glory shared.

The Flow Returns to Its Source

The divine flow completes a perfect circle. What began in God's heart returns there, enriched with the experience of creation, redemption, and transformation. The Son presents to the Father a perfected Bride, and the Father rejoices in the image of Himself reflected in her. 'Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father... that God may be all in all.' (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) This is the great restoration: the flow returning to its fountain, nothing lost, everything fulfilled.

Living in the Flow Today

To live in this vision is to live in alignment with eternity. It means to stop resisting, stop striving, stop damming the river with anxiety or self-will. The secret of the Christian life is not effort, but current. Wherever this flow is unhindered, there is life, light, and liberty. Wherever it is blocked, there is stagnation and death. The Spirit calls us again to step into the stream—to let mercy cleanse, grace empower, love compel, and peace stabilize. The

divine flow is not only doctrine; it is daily life. Every prayer, every act of kindness, every fellowship in the Spirit is a ripple in that eternal current.

The Final Vision

When all is said and done, one thing will remain, the flow of God Himself. Not churches, movements, nations, or histories, just the river of God filling all things with Himself. What began in eternity in foreknowledge, selection, and predestination unto sonship now flows through time in the divine economy of God's dispensing. The mystery of God, Christ, the mystery of Christ, the church, the economy, the mercy, the grace, the love, the peace, all are one stream, one life, one Person.

This is the very current the apostle seals with these words, "Grace, mercy, peace, will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love" (2 John 3). Here the source, the means, the nature, and the destination all merge into one divine flow.

And at the end, the voice of the Spirit and the Bride will be heard together saying, "Come. Let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). Here the circle closes, the flow that began in eternity past reaches eternity future, unbroken, unending, forever new. This is the divine flow in God's eternal purpose, the Triune God flowing Himself into many sons unto a corporate Bride for His everlasting expression and satisfaction.